



## State of Montana Project Management Office

### *Project Delivery and Closure Phase*

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## Project Closeout Meeting Agenda Instructions

This template provides an agenda for a Project Closeout (or Lessons Learned) Meeting to be held at the end of a project. The file also provides background on the closeout process and guidelines for the closeout meeting. The meeting's purpose is to:

- Formally close out the project with the project team.
- Identify the roles in the ongoing maintenance or future work on the product of the project.
- Capture "lessons learned" from this project to transfer to future work.

During most of the meeting, the team identifies and documents what worked, areas for improvement, lessons learned and recommendations for future projects and teams.

The project team may also cover items related to remaining project actions, follow-on implications and officially closing out the project from an administrative standpoint.

- Provides a full team forum for acknowledging successes and capturing lessons learned, so that the team and others benefit from what got learned on this project.
- Communicates the change in project status to the project team members and provides an official sense of closure to the project team and ensures that any final items needing attention have been identified and actions assigned.
- Provides an orderly transition of the product from development to production support.
- Plans the meeting well in advance so that all of the key players can attend. (Program Manager)
- Sends the Closeout Meeting Agenda to all attendees and requests that they think about the agenda items. (Program Manager)
- Optional: Requests information offline from people in preparation for the meeting. See our *Lessons Learned Survey* file for an example email survey.
- Prepares an agenda for use in the meeting. See the template in this file. (Program Manager)

- Prepares any reference materials that will help the meeting attendees – e.g., project history information such as how major milestones were achieved vs. plan.
- Follows the agenda during the workshop, making sure that all of the information gathered is documented by an assigned scribe. (Workshop Facilitator and assistant). See additional details on the facilitator role within this document.
- Project Closeout Meeting Agenda (and Guidelines).

## Guidelines for the Closeout Meeting

**Description:** The Project Closeout Meeting is held once the project is complete. The project manager and the team members all attend. The purpose of the meeting is to close out the project and to make a transition to the ongoing work associated with the product of the project. Discussion includes the project in general, identifying areas of change or improvement for the next project (“lessons learned”), the ongoing work requirements and/or plans for future work on the project.

Other Guidelines (see also “how to use this template” on the previous page)

- Invite project participants who are not full time team members (from support organizations). If appropriate, schedule items pertinent to them early in the meeting so they can leave after these items are covered, if they wish.
- Publish an agenda with ample time ahead of the meeting for participants to reflect back on the project.
- During the meeting, if a topic comes up that is too big to handle in the time frame allotted, schedule another time to deal with it.
- Draw people out. Do not assume silence is consent.
- Create an action list with responsibilities assigned and review them at the end of the meeting.

## Facilitator Tasks for Closeout Meetings

It is highly recommended that any closeout meeting that includes lessons learned work, use an objective facilitator. Lessons learned meetings can often touch on sensitive issues, especially when a project has experienced difficulties. It is critical that the facilitator be a neutral third party who ensures all points of view are brought out and the tone stays positive.

Typical duties of the facilitator:

1. Appoint a meeting assistant to help with taking notes, recording items on flipcharts and keeping track of agenda timeslots.
2. Review any materials the project manager prepares ahead of the meeting (project history, etc.).
3. Start the meeting by reviewing the agenda and ground rules.
4. (Assistant) Take notes throughout the meeting.

5. After the meeting, the Facilitator and Assistant give the Project Manager the notes and information generated at the meeting. They may assist the project manager with publishing the official meeting minutes and actions list.

## **The Closeout Meeting In Context: Project Closeout Steps**

Project Closeout activities include:

1. Approving and releasing the project deliverables.
  - Obtain sign-off on the delivered product.
  - Release all related documentation.
2. Planning for the transition of the project team and sustaining handoff for post-project work or support.
  - Give an updated project plan to the team leader, who assumes responsibility for subsequent work and support.
  - Give management a project staffing plan with the schedule for reducing the project.
  - Write a project turnover memo, directed to all people who have been in contact with the project, communicating the new status of the project and the new contact person. At a minimum, this should be sent to everyone who received a copy of the project charter.
3. Holding a Project Closeout meeting to review lessons learned and next steps for final closeout.
  - Perform a post project review with the project team, customer, vendors and management. The focus of the review is: What worked well? What did not work well? What would you do to improve the next project?
  - Update the project history file with final actual performance data and the post project review. The file is then stored and organized for easy access during future projects.
4. Performing final administrative closure.
  - Give individual performance feedback to the team members. In cases where the team member will receive an annual review from another manager, deliver feedback to the manager.
  - Close project accounts and finalize all billing. If required, audit and close the project budget numbers.

## Project Closure Reports

A Project Closure Report can be drafted and used for reference in the Project Closeout Meeting. Such a report is typically written for a broad audience including senior management, project participants, stakeholders, users, steering committees, application and technical support staff, etc.

Information typically included in a Project Closure Report includes:

- Final updated Project Status Report showing the original project plan and the actual project performance at completion – tasks, schedules, resources, etc.
- Description of the final products/services delivered by the project.
- Lessons learned from the project – technical, business process, management, etc. What worked well and what didn't. Things that will be of value on future projects and things to avoid. (These will be captured in the closeout meeting itself.)
- Specific feedback to/from any of the constituencies involved with the project.
- Pointers to further documentation – project history, user documentation, system documentation, etc.

## Administrative Information

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